



American Heart Association

Finance Committee
Public Hearing – March 11, 2020
HB5010 AAC Revenue Items To Implement The Governor's Budget
Oppose Section 9- Electronic Cigarette Tax of 50% Wholesale
Jim Williams, Government Relations Director
American Heart Association

I would like to thank the leadership of the Finance committee and its members for providing me with the opportunity to comment in **opposition** to Section 9 of HB 5010, which calls for an electronic cigarette tax of 50% of wholesale price, on behalf of the American Heart Association.

The American Heart Association (AHA) is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. Our mission is to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. The AHA OPPOSES section 9 of this bill, which calls for an electronic cigarette tax of 50% of wholesale, because it does not go far enough to ultimately build healthier lives for CT youth.

AHA supports taxing electronic cigarettes at the same rate as traditional cigarettes. We urge the committee to tax any substance that may be aerosolized or vaporized by an electronic smoking device, whether it contains nicotine or not, as well as any delivery devices, at a wholesale level that will achieve such parity with traditional cigarettes and direct this revenue to support evidence-based tobacco prevention or control programs, healthcare related services, or population health initiatives.

Nationwide, and in Connecticut, e-cigarette use among middle and high school students has now surpassed cigarette use. The 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey points out that Between 2011 and 2017, the percentage of high school students who had used e-cigarettes increased 6-fold from 2.4% to 14.7%. More alarmingly, between 2015 and 2017, the rate of current use increased 51% from 7.2% to 14.7%. Nationally, from 2017 to 2018, e-cigarette use by U.S high school students rose 78 percent. The U.S. Surgeon General has labeled youth e-cigarette use an "epidemic" and urged states to act to address the crisis.

Sincerely,

Jim Williams
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